

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02  
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 /067 W  
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R 111424Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3434  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMCONSUL ASMARA

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 2130

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, ET  
SUBJ: THE DIRG

1. IN RECENT WEEKS WE HAVE BEEN SEEING IN TELEGRAMS A VARIETY  
OF REFERENCES BY STATESMEN PARTICULARLY IN ARAB WORLD TELLING  
USG REPS OF PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENTS  
AND IMPLYING THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE SUCH THAT A CHANGE IN  
REGIME IN ADDIS IS NOT OUT OF QUESTION, PERHAPS IN NEAR FUTURE.  
WE ARE NOT SO SURE AS THEY. IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE PRESENT OR  
A MODIFIED PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC  
OR DIRG) MAY WELL CONTINUE ON INDEFINITELY.

2. THREATS ABOUND -- THREE GROUPS OF ERITREAN INSURGENTS,  
SOMALI TRIBESMEN IN OGADEN AND BALE PROVINCE, AFAR

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DISSIDENTS, TIGRE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT, ASSORTED  
FREE-LANCE SHIFAS (BANDITS), ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC  
UNION (EDU) AND ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY  
(EPRP). OF THESE, HOWEVER, ONLY EDU AND EPRP  
REPRESENT DIRECT CHALLENGES TO CENTRAL AUTHORITY.  
OTHERS ARE REGIONAL GROUPS INTERESTED IN LOCAL CONTROL  
BUT OF THEMSELVES POSING NO PARTICULAR THREAT TO ADDIS

GOVT. INDEED THEY HAVE NO DESIGNS ON CENTRAL GOVT THAT WE AWARE OF AN WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN ATTRACTING SUPPORT OUTSIDE OF THEIR OWN AREAS IF THEY DID. EDU HAS GAINED IN RECENT MONTHS AND HAS CONSOLIDATED ITS HOLD OF MUCH OF BEGEMDIR PROVINCE. EPRP'S STRENGTH IS CHIEFLY IN ADDIS, BUT NEITHER ON THEIR OWN APPEAR HAVE REQUISITE FORCE TO CHALLENGE DIRG SERIOUSLY, ALTHOUGH BOTH HAVE CAPACITY TO CAUSE CONSIDERABLE MISCHIEF. EDU IN PARTICULAR MAY WELL GROW STRONGER WITH ARAB HELP, BUT WE STILL BELIEVE THAT TO BE SUCCESSFUL, EITHER ONE OR OTHER OF THESE TWO (THERE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF THEM JOINING FORCES) WOULD NEED SUPPORT OF MILITARY OR SUBSTANTIAL PORTIONS OF IT. YET TO THIS POINT, DESPITE OCCASIONAL RUMBLINGS OF DISCONTENT AMONG SOME MILITARY AND POLICE ELEMENTS, AND REPORTS OF BOTH EDU AND EPRP SYMPATHIES IN RANKS, MILITARY HAS GIVEN NO EVIDENCE AS YET THT IT HAS WILL, COHESION OR LEADERS TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT FOR DIRG AND/OR MOUNT CHALLENGE OF ITS OWN OR SUPPORT SOMEONE ELSE. REPEATED BATTLEFIELD REVERSES COULD IN TIME LEAD TO SUFFICIENT DIENCHANTMENT WITH DIRG TO CAUSE WIDESPREAD MILITARY DISSENSION (THERE ARE SOME DEFECTIONS NOW), BUT THERE AS YET NO INDICATION THIS IS REAL POSSIBILITY. MEANWHILE, DIRG HAS BEEN ARMING PEASANTS AND WORKERS AND HAS BEGUN CREATE PEOPLE'S FIGHTING FORCE OF ITS OWN. HOW USEFUL THESE PEOPLE WOULD BE IN SHOWDOWN IS DEBATABLE, BUT IT WOULD BE MISTAKE TO WRITE THEM OFF ENTIRELY.

3. IF, THEREFORE, DIRG A) SURVIVES ITS OWN INTERNAL  
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CRISIS CAUSED BY EVENTS OF FEB 3 (AND IT APPEARS TO BE DOING THAT), B) CAN AVOID FURTHER DISSENSION IN ITS OWN RANKS (CURRENT RUMOR IS THAT THERE IS SERIOUS DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN MENGISTU AND POLITBURO CHIEF HAILU FIDA), C) CAN CONTINUE TO CONTROL EPRP URBAN GUERRILLA THREAT, AND D) IS NOT DRAW INTO OUTRIGHT HOSTILITIES WITH SUDAN OR SOMALIA, IT MAY VERY WELL REMAIN FIRMLY IN POWER FOR SOME TIME TO COME EVEN THOUGH SUBSTANTIAL PORTIONS OF ETHIOPIAN REAL ESTATE REMAIN OUTSIDE GOVT CONTROL. SHOULD DIRG SUCCEED IN ATTRACTING SUBSTANTIAL MATERIAL ASSISTANCE PLUS TRAINING FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND SUCCEED IN BUILDING UP ITS ARMED FORCES WELL BEYOND THEIR PRESENT LEVEL, IT MAY EVEN SUCCEED IN STRENGTHENING ITS POSITION. SITUATION COULD VERY WELL CHANGE IF MENGISTU HIMSELF WERE TO BE NEXT CASUALTY, BUT EVEN THEN WE WOULD WANT TO LOOK AT CIRCUMSTANCES AT THAT TIME BEFORE MAKING JUDGMENT ON FUTURE AND/OR COMPOSITION OF DIRG.  
TIENKEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
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